

154
A
S E R M O N

Preach'd

At the REVIVING of the

General Meetings

OF THE

Gentlemen and Others

OF THE

C O U N T Y of D O R S E T :

I N T H E

Church of *St. Mary-le-Bow*,

Decemb. the 2^d. 1690.

By *WILLIAM WAKE*, D. D. Chaplain in
Ordinary to Their M A J E S T I E S, and Preacher
to the Honourable Society of *GRAYS-INN*.

L O N D O N,

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To my Honoured Friends
AND
COUNTRY-MEN,

Mr. { Robert Norris.
Roger Hazard.
John Dutton.
William Oliver.
Henry Hillyard.
Robert Colmer.

{ Thomas Castle.
Nich. Purchas.
Mr. { George Biffon.
Thomas Petty.
John Cave.
John Ernle.

Stewards of the Dorsetshire-Feast.

GENTLEMEN,

AFTER so long a Discontinuance of these
Friendly Meetings, it could not but be a
More than Ordinary Satisfaction to Me, to
see them again revived in such Times as these, in
which the Spirit of Christian Charity seems almost
to have been utterly departed from among Us.

It was this made me willing rather to expose my
Self to the Censures which some may perhaps think
fit to pass upon Me, for presuming to fill the place

The Epistle Dedicatory.

of One of the greatest Ornaments of our Church as well as of our County, and put these Thoughts together, as the Hurry of a few Hours the Day before would allow me to do ; than not shew my Readiness to contribute what in me lay, to so Good and Worthy a Design. And tho' I am sensible how little there was, more than the seasonableness of the Argument, to recommend my Discourse to your Acceptance ; yet since you have been pleased, in the Name of many Others of our Country, to desire a farther Publication of it, I cannot refuse so good an Opportunity to declare my Respects to Them, and in a particular Manner to assure you with what sincerity, I am,

Gentlemen,

Your very Affectionate

Country Man and Servant

WILL WAKE.

I John iv. 21.

And this Commandment have we from Him, That He who loveth God, love his Brother also.

WHEN our Saviour had finish'd his Other Business upon Earth, and was now just ready to Offer up himself for our *Salvation*; We read in St. *John*, that the *Subject* wherewith he chose to finish his *Preaching* was this *Exhortation*, *John* xiii. 34. That they should *love one Another*, *As I have loved you*, says He, *that ye also Love one Another.*

And to shew that this was indeed a *Commandment* of the greatest *Value* to Him, He not only chose the most proper *Time* for the inculcating of it; When he was Himself about to give the Greatest *Example* of this *love*, that was ever heard of in the *World*, Rom. V. 7. 8. But he pressed it with the strongest *Engagements* too: He left it to them as the *Badge* and *Mark* of their *Discipleship*; the very thing that should *distinguish* them from all the rest of the *World*, and shew them more than all their *Miracles*, all the *mighty Works* that they did to Belong to Him, *Jo.* xiii. 35. By

35. *By this shall All Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love One to Another.*

And as if this had not yet been sufficient to declare his concern for this *Duty*, He again returns in the *Close* of his *Discourse*, to the same *Topick* of *Love* with which he had begun it; And presses it with another *Consideration*, and that if possible, more likely to prevail with them than the foregoing. He tells them that this would be the *Only* way to find any favour from *God*, or any *Kindness* from *Himself*. That if they *Loved one Another*, then He also would *Love Them*; But otherwise they must not expect to be at all regarded by Him, Jo. xv. 10. *If ye keep my Commandments ye shall abide in my Love; even as I have kept my Fathers Commandments, and abide in his Love.* And what the *Commandment* was that he there meant, you may see *Ver. 2.* *And this is my Commandment, says He, that ye Love One Another.* And again *Verse 17.* *These things I command ye, that ye Love One Another.*

And when such was the *Value* which it pleased the Blessed *Jesus* to put upon this *Duty*, we ought not to wonder if We find his *Apostles* every where very careful to inforce it upon us.

St. Jerome has told us that it was one of the most *Ancient Traditions* of the *Church*; that *St. John* being grown to a very great *Age*, so that he

Hieron in Galat. vi. 10. p. 99. E.

was no longer able to support Himself, was carried every day by the *Disciples* to the Church, where tho' his Voice was so feeble that He could not *Preach* to them, yet he never fail'd every Day to instil this *Precept* into their Hearts, *Little Children Love one Another.*

The *Christians* after some Time growing weary of hearing nothing else but this one *Exhortation* from Him, and wondring what the meaning of it should be, took the freedom to ask Him the *Reason* of it. He answer'd, in these words, worthy, says that *Father*, of St. *John*; that he therefore chose out this above all other *Exhortations* to *Press* upon them, because our Saviour had *Commanded* this above all other *Duties* to be *Observed* by them: and that this one thing well practised would alone be enough to bring them unto *Salvation*.

Qui respondit dignam Johanne sententiam: Quia praeceptum Domini est. Et si solum fiat, sufficit.
Hieron. ib.

But we need not recur to any *Apocryphal Traditions*, to learn how great a Care St. *John* had to stir up his *Disciples* to this Duty. The *Epistle* we have now before us is a sufficient *Proof* of it: Wherein he at large *Comments* upon our Saviours *Text*; and sets forth to us Our love to One Another as the great Evidence of our love to God: And both the One and the Other, as alike required of every true *Christian*: If a

1 Jo. iv. 20

Man say I Love God and Hateth his Brother, He

is

is a lyar: For he that loveth not his Brother whom He hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this Commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God, love his Brother also.

Such is the *Concern* we All have in this *Duty*: And 'tis for the more effectual Discharge of it, that we are now met together in this place: To stir up one another to a *Christian Love* and *Charity*; And in some sort revive one of the most *ancient Customs* of the *Church*, those *Feasts of Charity*, which the *Apostles*, or rather our *Saviour Christ* himself in his *last Supper* began, and the best *Ages* of the *Church* never fail'd religiously to observe.

And 'tis in pursuance of the same *design*, that I have chosen these *Words* of *St. John*, to be the *Introductory Subject* of this *Solemnity*, and I hope a *Happy Augury* of the future *Blessed Effects* of it; wherein I shall consider these *three things*:

- I. What the *Nature* of the *Duty* here proposed is, *Of Loving One Another?*
- II. To what *Persons*, and in what *Proportion* this *Love* is to be *Extended* by *Us*?
- III. What *Obligations* our *Christian Profession* lays upon *Us* to such a *Charity*?

These

These are all plainly pointed out to us in the *Words* of the *Text*; and will I suppose afford us no improper *Subject* for Our present *Reflections*. And,

I. We will consider, What is the *Nature* of the *Duty* here proposed to Us, Of *Loving One Another*.

It has been the Wonder of many, who have not sufficiently enquired into this Matter; How it comes to pass that a *Virtue* so much talked of amongst all Others, and so justly Celebrated by our Selves too, as that of *Friendship*, should yet have found so little place in the *Gospel of Christ*: Inasmuch that I cannot tell whether it has been Once recommended to us, either by our *Saviour* or his *Apostles*.

Vid Arist. Eth. l. viii. Cic. de Amicit. Andron. Rhod. in Arist. Eth. &c.

A *Reflection* this that may be apt at first sight to startle the Thoughts even of a *Good Man*; and tempt him to entertain a much meaner Opinion than is fit of our *Religion*, upon the account of it. That it has taken so little care for the Improvement of that which all the *World* has ever thought not only one of the greatest *Blessings* and *Comforts* of *Life*, but one of its greatest *Ornaments* too; the Noblest *Priviledge*, and *Advantage* of our *Reasonable Natures*.

Ἄνευ τοῦ εἶχον ἑδείξαι ἐλάττω (ὅτι, ἔχον ταυτα καὶ ἀγαθὰ πάντα. Arist. ib. c. 1.

But indeed there is nothing that more argues the *Perfection* of *Christianity* than this: Nor which

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better

better exposes the narrowness of *Soul* in all Other *Mens* and *Professions* besides.

For what is it in Effect that we understand by *Friendship*; But a *Great Love*, and a *Dear Affection*? A *Desire* of *Doing* all the *Good* we can to Him whom we call our *Friend*: And that expressing its self in a sincere *Endeavour* of *serv-ing Him*, and *promoting* his *Interest* to the utmost of our *Power*. In short, such a *love* as produces a *Mutual Union* of *Heart* and *Will* between the *Persons* who stand in this *Relation* to one another: And makes every thing that befalls either, whether *good* or *bad*, alike to both of them; As if there were but *one common Interest*, as there is but *one common Mind* and *Affection* betwixt them.

Arist. Eth. lib.
viii. c. 7.
Cic. de Amic.
Fugiendus esse
nimias Amici-
tias.

This is that which we call *Friendship*: And this the *Philosophers* restrain'd within the narrow bounds of one or two, or at most of a very few; Whom either *Country*, or *Relation*; *Parity* of *Age*, or *Similitude* of *Manners* and *Dispositions*; The *Chance* of *Fortune*, or the *Accident* of *Education*; but above all a mutual love of *Vertue* and *Probity* had brought together, and united within the sacred *Bonds* of it.

But *Christianity* has set open the *Enclosure*; And cast off the *Name*, which had indeed but spoil'd the *Vertue*: And made that *common* to all the

the *World*, which was before confined to a few particular Persons.

Instead of a Narrow Friendship, It has taught us that which is more Noble and Divine, a *Universal Love and Charity* : And commanded us to treat *All Men whatsoever*, in the same manner that Others were wont to Do those whom they call'd their *Friends* heretofore.

Hence Clem.
Alex. Strom.
l. II. p. 377.
378. Defines
the Christian
Ἀγάπη τοῦ θε-
οῦ ἔκτενεια
φιλίας καὶ
φιλανθρωπίας.

Thus has *Christianity* not destroy'd but perfected Friendship ; and both Exalted the *Nature*, and Enlarged the *Object* of it. And if notwithstanding All this we still find the *World* as far from *Loving One Another* as before : If their *Charity* be as small, and their *Friendships* as confined, as if no such *Commands* had ever been deliver'd to us ; yet this serves only to reproach our own *Perverseness*, but ought not at all to prejudice the *Excellencie* of the *Gospel*, that has call'd us to so much a more *Perfect* and *Generous* discharge of this *Duty*.

Now this will lead us into an Easie *Apprehension*, of the *Nature* and *Offices* of that *Love* we have here recommended to us.

There are but few, if any, so *Morose* and *Ill-natured*, As not to have some *Person* or *Other* whom they Esteem in a peculiar manner to be

their *Friend*, and *love* and *value* beyond all Others, as such. Here then let us fix our thoughts; And consider what that *Kindness* and *Affection* is which we have for *such One*, and that will give us a *sensible Knowledge*, of what we ought to have for *All the World*.

But however, to be a little more particular as to this Matter.

1st. He that will *Love his Brother* as he is required to do, must above all things take Care to preserve a *Sincere Affection* and *Good Will* towards Him. By which I mean, not only that we must not Entertain any *Hatred* or *Malice* in our *Hearts* against any; much less Cherish any *Envious* or *Uncharitable Thoughts*, any *Unchristian Prejudices*, or *Resentments* against our *Neighbour*, howsoever we may chance to have been *provoked*, or *injured*, or *Otherwise offended* by Him: But that on the contrary, we should always keep up in our Minds a *real Kindness*, and *Affection* towards Him.

This is the *first thing* required of us, the *Ground* and *Foundation* of this *Duty*; And without which all our *Outward Actions* will be *False* and *Hypocritical*. 'Tis an *Easie* matter for Men to carry it fair to One Another, when yet at the same Time, they are far from having any
real

real Love in their Hearts for One Another. And there may be Reasons enough to perswade the Most Uncharitable Persons so to do. It may be they should run some Hazard, or sustain some Loss by shewing their Resentments; and then their Fear and Interest will engage them to Dissemble their Aversion. Perhaps the Person whom they hate is out of their reach, is too Great, or too Cunning to be Openly struck at by Them; and the way to do him a Mischief, is to hide the Malice of their Souls towards Him. And thus their very Kindness is their Crime: And the Colour they put upon their Ill-will, adds only the Guilt of Falseness and Hypocrisie to their Uncharitableness, and the more encreases their Sin and their Damnation.

But true love must begin in the Heart; it must be Honest and without Disguise: And then, Rom. xii. 9. though we should never have any Opportunity to make any particular outward Expressions of it to our Brother, as 'tis certain that to a great part of Mankind we never shall; yet God will accept this inward Disposition of the Mind; and our readiness to do him good shall be esteemed, as if we had effectually done it to him.

Here therefore our Love must begin, but it must not stop here: There is more than this required of us towards all the World: To those whom

whom we have never *seen*, nor perhaps shall ever have any the least Knowledge of. And therefore,

2dly. To this inward *Affection* of Mind towards one Another, we must in the next place add those *General Instances* of Kindness which we owe to *All Mankind*, and which, if our Love be sincere, we shall naturally pay to them.

Now such I Esteem, first our *Desires*, and then our *Resolutions* as far as in us lies to promote the *Good* and *Welfare* of our Brother. And both these shewing themselves upon all Occasions, in a *Real Complacency* and *Satisfaction* at every thing that *Happens Well* to him ; as on the Other side, in a true *Condolence* and *Trouble*, for any *sad Accidents* that shall at any time befall Him.

This is what *St. Paul* Excellently sets out to us, in the *Example* of that concern which the several *Members* of the *Natural Body* have for One another, *1 Cor. xii. 26.* For as in that if One Member be *Gratified*, All the Others *Rejoyce* at it ; Or if One receive any *Harm* or *Injury*, All the rest bare a share in its *Affliction* : So here, whether we consider our selves only as we are *Partakers* of the same *Common Nature* ; Or more particularly, as we are *Members* of the same

same Mystical Body the Church : Or yet more especially, of the same Country and Civil Society under which we live ; to say nothing now of what yet ought not to be forgot on this Occasion, viz. Of that still nearer Relation we stand in of Friendship and Acquaintance, as we are all of the same County ; and so in that respect too more than Others, Brethren and Neighbours to one another : We ought certainly upon all these Accounts, to bear a Common Concern and Affection towards each other ; and be pleased at whatever Good befalls Any of us, and be troubled at any Evil or Calamity that we know lights upon any other, as if it had in some sense been our own Case.

But we must carry Our Charity yet farther ! And to this Affection and Disposition of Mind towards our Brother, add,

3dly. Our Endeavours too, as we have Opportunity, to shew our Good-will to Him, by all Real Acts of Kindness and Beneficence.

This is the last Office which this Love requires of us to compleat our Duty, and without which we shall still be found to come short in it.

Now these Expressions of our Charity may be of two very different Kinds, and as such will lay very different Obligations upon us : Either

1st. Such

(1st.) Such as *All Men* are able, and ought at *all times* to shew their *Love* by, and that towards *All the World*; Or else, (2^{dy}.) Such as some *certain Persons* only, are capable of *Exercising*; and that but towards a *few Men*, and at some *certain Times*, and upon some *particular Occasions*.

(1.) Of the former sort are * Our *Prayers* for *Neighbours welfare*, and especially for that which is of *Greatest concern* to him, his *Everlasting Salvation*: * Our *Deprecations* of all *Evil* from him, both in this *World* and in the *other*: * Our *Care* not to do any thing willingly that may turn to his *Hurt* or *Detriment*: And lastly, to name no more; * Our *Thanksgivings* to *God* for all his *Blessings* to *Mankind*, and for all the *Good* which he is pleased continually to shew down upon us.

These are such *Expressions* of our *Love* from which no *Man* can ever be *Exempted*. We *All* of us have it in our power to do thus much *Good* to our *Neighbour*, and we are therefore *All* of us to esteem our selves *obliged* so to do.

It was this which *St. Paul* meant, when he directed *Timothy*, 1 *Epist.* ii. 1. That *first* of all, or above all things, *Supplications*, *Prayers*, *Intercessions*, and *Giving of thanks* should be made for *All Men*: And that *St. James* commanded

us All, to *Pray One for another.* And what frequent Cautions our *Blessed Saviour* has every where given us, not to *Offend our Brother*, not to do any thing that may but by *Accident* prove *prejudicial* to him, every part of the *Gospel* sufficiently shews.

James V. 16.

Mat. xviii. 6.

Mark ix. 43.

But these though the most *Extensive*, are yet in some respect but the *least* of those *outward Expressions*, we are to make of our *Love to One Another.* And there is much more to be done in Order to a *full Discharge* of this Duty. For,

2dly. We must to our *Prayers*, and *Care* not to do any *Injury* to our *Brother*, add our hearty *Endeavours* too, as we have *Opportunity*, and are in a *Condition*, by all means possible to advance his *Welfare*.

It was a *Question* which *St. James* once put to some Men heretofore, who thought they might be saved by *Faith*, though they had no *Works* to make it perfect: *Jam. ii. 15, 16.* If a *Brother* or *Sister* be naked, and destitute of daily Food; And one of you say unto him, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled: notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the Body: What doth it profit? Even so *Faith*, if it hath not *Works*, is dead being alone. The meaning of the *Apostle* is this: That as that *Charity* is good for

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Nothing

Nothing which stops in a few insignificant *Wishes* of our Brother's Welfare, and does not shew it self in *real Acts* of Kindness and Affection to him, when he stands in need of it ; So *Faith*, if it be not accompanied with a suitable *Practise*, is empty and vain, and of no value in order to our *Salvation*. And sure we may as well invert the *Argument*, and conclude upon the same *Grounds*, That as *Faith* without *Piety* is of no worth ; So a *Good Will* and a *Kind Affection*, which does not upon *Occasion* shew it self in *Works* of Mercy and Charity, is but an *Empty Name*, nor will ever be reckon'd in the sight of God, as *true Love*.

Love is an *Active* and *Vigorous Principle* ; and if it be *sincere*, whether towards God or our Neighbour, will certainly shew it self in *Fruits* suitable to the *Nature* of it. But now what the several *Kinds* and *Measures* are, whereby we are to *Exercise* this *Love* towards our Brother, it is as impossible for me to describe to you ; as to set before you all the several *Wants* of the One, and all the *Various Circumstances* and *Abilities* of the Other to relieve them. But as the || *former* of these must be suited to the *Necessities* of our Neighbour, and be *directed* according as his *Defects* require our *Assistance* : So for the † *latter* ; we must consider how far we are able to supply his *Needs*,

See 1 Joh. iii.
17, 18.

|| Mat. xxv. 35,
36.
Rom. xii. 20.

† 1 Cor. xvi. 2.
2 Cor. viii. 12.
& ix. 6, 7.
Gal. vi. 10.

Needs, and the more we do for him, the greater and more certain shall our Reward be.

In short ; As the Great Rule which our Saviour has left us as to this Point, is this General Direction, *That we should Love our Neighbour as our selves* : So whoever will upon all these Occasions carefully apply first, and then sincerely follow the *Dictates* of it ; I may venture to say, he will have this Security, Either not to be much mistaken in the *Measure* of his *Charity*, or not to run any great *Hazard* by it.

Mat. xxii. 39.
comp. with
ch. vii. 12.

And this may suffice to have been spoken to our first Point, What the Nature of the Duty here recommended to us, of *Loving One Another* is ? Our next business must be to enquire,

Illy. To what *Persons*, and in what *Proportion* this *Love* is to be Extended by us ?

It has been always looked upon as the great Defect of the *Jews* in interpreting the *Rules* of *Charity* which God gave them heretofore under the *Law* ; that they confined their *Notions* of a *Neighbour* to such a One as was either of the same *Religion*, or the same *Country* with *Themselves*, and esteemed themselves to have been utterly disengaged from all *Obligations* to any *Others*.

* Acts X. 34.
Gal. iii. 18, &c.

|| Gen. ix. 5.
Acts xvii. 26.

But this *Mistake* our *Blessed Saviour* has now removed under the *Gospel*. He has abolish'd all * *Distinction* of *Jew* or *Gentile*; and taught us by a *Brother* to *Understand* All sorts of Men, whatever their *Country* or *Religion* be: As being all || descended from the same *first Person*, the *Common Father* and *Parent* of us all.

Gal. vi. 10.

So that when *St. John* therefore bids us to *Love* our *Brother*; and our *Saviour*, to *Love* our *Neighbour as our selves*; *St. Paul* tells us, That we must interpret these *Expressions* in their *Utmost Latitude*: And that however we may make some *difference* in the *Exercise* of our *Charity* as to the *Kinds* and *Proportions* of it, yet we must not set any *Bounds* to the *Extent* of it; But *As we have Opportunity*, must *Do Good unto All Men*, though *Especially* to them that are of the *Household of Faith*.

And this is what I take to have been *St. Peter's* meaning in his 2 *Epist.* I. 7. Where setting down a particular *Catalogue* of our *Christian Duties* both with respect to *God* and to *One Another*; He bids us *Add to Brotherly Kindness, Charity*. Meaning I suppose thereby, that to that particular *Affection* which as *Christians* we ought to have for *One Another*, and which he there calls *Brotherly Love*, we should *Add Charity*, that is, a *General Love* to *All Men*, whatever their *Faith* or *Profession* be.

This

This then is the *First*, and *Largest Extent* of all of this *Duty*: But tho it be therefore certain that We must, as we have Opportunity, maintain a *Common Love* towards *all Mankind*; yet it is no less certain, that We both may and ought to have a * *more particular Regard* to those, whom the *Holy Scriptures* are wont in a more peculiar

* Rom. xii. 10.
1 Pet. I. 22.

Manner to represent to us under the *Name of Brethren*. And therefore to this *first Remark*, I must add,

2dly, That we should look upon our selves to stand yet * *more Engaged* as we are *Christians*, to *Love One Another*, and that in a much higher degree, than we are obliged to do *those* who are *without*.

* Gal. vi. 10.
Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6.

And this I speak in the *General*, with relation to *All* those who are called by the *Name of Christ*, and adhere to the same *Foundation of Faith* with us, however they may *Otherwise differ* from us, in some *lesser Points*, whether of *Faith* or *Worship*.

It is a very sad Case, and I think much to be lamented by all *Good Men*, to consider what unreasonable *Heats* and *Animosities* there are among the *Different Churches* and *Communities* of *Christians* towards *Each Other*. With what *Rashness* and *Uncharitableness*, they *censure*, and *persecute*, and as far as they can, even *Damn One Another*; And plainly shew that they have more *Charity* for a *Jew* or a *Turk*, than for a *Fellow Christian* that does

does not come up in Every Point to their own *Fancies and Opinions*.

This is certainly a *Great Fault*, and which ought by All Means to be corrected by Us. He who differs the most from us, yet so long as He holds fast the *Fundamentals of Christianity*, must needs agree with us in much more important Points than any in which He departs from Us. And had we therefore but as much regard to the *Blessed Jesus* and his *Gospel*, as we have to our own *Pride and Self-conceit*, We might find much more reason to *Love our Brother* for the *Worship*, and *Praise*, and *Love*, and *Adoration*, which he pays with us to our *Dear Master*; than to hate him for not *subscribing* to our own *particular Canons and Definitions*: And which 'tis Great Odds but if he should do, He would not mend his *Faith*, but only give us the Satisfaction of *Erring* together with us. I am sure He that *believes* himself to be in the *right*, must own this to be *true* of all others who *differ* from Him; and we cannot doubt but that they think the very *same* of Him.

But now what the precise *Distinction* is between these two *Kinds of Love*; Whether there be any *particular Instances* of our *Affection* owing to our *Fellow-Christians*, which we are not obliged to *show to Others*; Or whether all the *Disference* be, that we are to pay the *same Offices* of *Charity*

Charity to Both, only with more Care, and a greater Concern, to the One than the Other, it is not perhaps so easie to Determine. Some have thought that that great Command in the III^d Chapt. of this Epistle, ver. 16. Of Laying down our Lives for the Brethren, though it may in some Cases be worthily extended to Others, yet is Matter of Duty only to a Fellow-Christian; Or at least to such a One, as by this Means may be likely to become so. But this is beyond dispute; that whatever our Love requires from us to All Men, must in a singular manner be shewn to These. Our Prayers for them must be more fervent; our Desires towards them more warm; our Concern for their Good, both as to this World and the Other more tender, than for those who do not stand in the same Relation to us. So says St. Paul, Rom. xii. 10. Be kindly affectioned one to another, with Brotherly Love; i. e. Have an Ardent Affection, and as becomes Brethren, for one another: And St. Peter, 1 Epist. I. 22. Seeing, says he, ye have purified your Souls in Obeying the Truth, through the Spirit, unto Unfeigned Love of the Brethren, see that ye Love One Another with a pure Heart fervently.

Theodoret. in
loc. Θεμελιώ-
της καὶ ἀδελ-
φούς πρόπε-
σαν τὴν μετ'
ἀλλήλους δι-
άσπον.

And as we ought to have a Greater Regard to all Christians in General, than to those who are not yet called by that Name, so I do not at all question

3dly, But

3dly, But that even among *Christians* themselves we may make a *Distinction* too, and have a yet Greater *Love* for *Some* than for *Others*. As for Example; for those of our own particular *Communion*, than for Such as are *Strangers*, it may be *Enemies* to it: For our *Friends*, our *Country-men*, or our *Acquaintance*, than for Those who have no such *Relation* to us. But especially for those to whom we are tied, not only by the *Laws* of *Common Charity*, but by other particular *Obligations*, whether of *Nature*, or of the *Gospel*: Such as our *Parents*, and *Children*, and near *Relatives*; and above all, for Those who stand in the strictest *Bond* of all of *Friendship*, The *Husband* and *Wife*, to *One Another*.

This is what *St. Paul* evidently implies, *1 Tim. V.* where speaking of those who were to be received into the *Publick Charity* of the *Church*, He takes especial *Care*, that if they had any *Friends* and *Relations* that were able to maintain them, they should be sure to provide for them, and not let the *Church* be burthened: Ver. 4. 8. If any *Widow*, says he, have *Children*, or *Nephews*, let them learn first to shew *Piety* at home: But if any provide not for his *Own*, and especially for Those of his own *House*, he hath denied the *Faith*, and is worse than an *Infidel*.

And the Reason of it is very Clear : Because the more and greater the *Obligations* we lie under to Love One Another are, the stricter by consequence must our *Engagements* be so to do. And therefore, where to the *Common Precept* of *Charity* there are also super-added those *particular Ties* we have now been mentioning ; it is not to be doubted but that we ought to have so much the more dear *Affection* for our *Brother*, the more near the *Relation* is wherein He stands to us.

But I must add yet one *Remark* more, with reference to this Point : For,

4thly, Our *Christian Love* must be extended not only to all those we have hitherto been speaking of ; but to Them also whom it may be we shall think of all Others, to have the least pretence either to the *Character* or *Affection* of a *Brother*, and that is to *Our very Enemies*.

Nor will this appear at all *Unreasonable* to Us, when we shall consider what other *Duties* our *Religion* requires of Us, and which *Naturally* lead the way to this. A *Christian* either has not, or I am sure ought not to have any *Enemy*. He may be *injured, abused, affronted* ; He may be *persecuted, and spoiled*, by *Unjust and Violent Men*. And they who do this may in the *Common Language* of the *World*, be called
D his

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Rom. xii. 17,
20, 21.

his *Enemies*. But alas! The *Gospel* knows no such thing. It allows us not to account Any Man our *Enemy*, but by *forgiving* him, obliges us, if we can no Other way prevail with Him, to make Him our *Brother*. And having done so, it cannot be thought much if after this it requires us to *deal* with him as *such*.

Or however, If we must speak with the *World*, and call such *Persons* our *Enemies*; yet still even as such we must Exercise this Duty towards them: *Mat. V. 44. Ye have heard, says our Saviour, that it hath been said, Thou shalt Love thy Neighbor, and Hate thine Enemies. But I say unto you, Love your Enemies; Bless them that Curse you, Do Good to them that Hate you, and Pray for them which despitefully Use you and Persecute you.*

But here then a Difficulty may arise, and it is this. For if the *Case* be so as I have now been representing it to you; If the *Gospel* of *Christ* requires such an *Universal Love* towards *All Men*; What then shall we say? Are all Men to be esteemed alike by Us? And are we to make no difference between a *Stranger* and a *Country-man*; or which seems yet more unreasonable, Betwixt a *Friend* and an *Enemy*?

*See somewhat like this: Arist. Eth. l. viii. c. 1. ὁ ἐχθρὸς τὸς ἀλλοτρίους ἀγαθὰ ποιεῖν ὁμοίως ὡς τοὺς φίλους.

No, this is by no means the *Consequence* of what We have now been speaking. * Indeed were all Men so Good and Perfect, so Just and Honest,

Honest, so Prudent and Sincere as they ought to be; then I confess all *Distinctions* of this Kind would in Great Measure be swallowed up: And Every Man be as much a *Friend* to his Neighbour, as any Man possibly could be. Because then we should have no *Passions* or *Prejudices*, no private *Interests* or *Designs* to carry on: But should All without disguise Love One Another as the *Gospel commands*, and should all deserve to be perfectly trusted, and made *Friends* by One Another.

And this Height and Perfection of Love, Christianity would have us come up to here, and I hope shall One Day bring us All to in Heaven. There all the little *Enclosures* of Friendship shall be removed; and an *Universal Charity* succeed in the stead of them. But in the mean time, whilst we are in this World, where we cannot Extend the actual Exercise of our Charity very far if we would; and have to do with Persons of several Ages, and Parts, and Manners, and Degrees, Of different, and often times contrary *Interests* and *Inclinations*: Some of which are not worthy, it may be not capable of that full *Affection* we bestow on Others; Many are Altogether Strangers to us, and we cannot tell what to think of Them; and not a few that will remain Our Enemies, let us do whatever we can to reclaim

D 2

Them.

Them: Though our *Love* must in its *Extent* be *Universal*, yet the *Degrees* of it cannot be *Equal*, nor the *Expressions* of it *alike* to *All*; But some must receive much larger *Portions* of it than Others either *need* or *deserve* to do.

The *Summ* then of this *Matter* is, in short, this: We must * *Love* and *Pray* for *All Men*:
 * Mat. V. 44. † *Must* be *Kind*, and *Courteous*, and *Obliging* to
 † Tim. II. 1. † *Every One*: † We must do no *Harm* or *Injury* to
 † 1 Pet. III. 8. † *Any*; nor take pleasure in any *Evil*, that hap-
 † Rom. xii. 9, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20. pens to any. We must *recompence* to no *Man* *Evil*
 Rom. xiii. 10. for *Evil*: If a *Stranger*, nay if our *Enemy* be in
 distress we must, if we can, *releive* him: If
 he *Hunger*, we must *feed* him; If he *Thirst*, we
 must *give* Him *Drink*: And all this we must
 be ready upon *Occasion* to do, to the *whole*
World.

But then we must *pray* more *particularly*, and
 with greater *Zeal* and *Fervency*, for those to
 whom we stand more *particularly* *Obliged*; for
 our *Fellow-Christians*, for our *Brethren*, our *Re-*
lations, and our *Friends*. We must *love* them
 with *higher Affections*: We must *desire* more *ear-*
nestly, and *endeavour* more *heartily* to do *Them*
Good. We must *rejoice* more *exceedingly* in their
Welfare, and be *touch'd* with a more *sensible* *Con-*
cern at their *Misfortunes*. And all this *still* in *pro-*
portion as we stand either *more* or *less* *Engaged* to
Them.
 And

† Pet. I. 2.

III. 8, &c.

Gal. vi. 10.

† Joh. III. 17.

And especially for what concerns the Other Expressions of this Duty, these must be yet more restrain'd by us ; because we neither can *Extend* them *very far*, nor *Discharge* them towards *very many*, and therefore must be the more careful in the *Exercise* of them.

He who is the Best disposed to *Love* his *Brother*, yet cannot bestow *Alms* on *All* that are in *Want* ; nor *Instruct* *All* that are *Ignorant* ; nor *visit* *All* that are *sick* ; nor *correct* *All* that are *vicious* in the *World*. And therefore both *Prudence* and *Charity* will certainly Oblige us in these and the like Cases, to shew our *Love* to those *first*, either whose *Wants* are the *greatest*, or whose *Relation* is the *nearest* to us : That is, in other words, to such as have the *most* and *best* *Pre- tences* to *Our Kindness*.

And then lastly, for what concerns the business of *Friendship* ; it is not to be question'd but that while we are careful to *Love All* as we ought to do, we may *Love some* in a more *peculiar Manner* than *Others* : And *Trust* them a great deal farther ; and *consult* them with more *Freedom* ; and *entertain* them with a *Higher Affection* than we either *can* or *need* to do the *rest* of *Mankind*.

It is the *misfortune* of the *World*, that there are but a *very few* who are fit to be made *Friends* in it ; and that enjoy the *Qualifications* requisite to
such

Arist. Eth.
l. viii. c. 4.

such a *Character*. And therefore we must be content to make those so whom we can find, and having made them, we must *Love* them accordingly. Nor is it any want of *Charity* in me that I do not admit another into my *Bosom*, to know my very *Soul*, and partake of all the *Secrets* of my *Life*, to love and delight in, to trust and depend upon in all Emergencies, who is *Cross* and *Ill-natur'd*; who will neither *Love* nor *Trust* me again; in short, who has neither the *Sense* nor the *Piety* to encourage me so to do: But would rather be an *Unpardonable Weakness* and even *Folly* in me if I should.

And this may suffice for the *Second thing* I was to speak to, Of the *Persons* to whom our *Love* was to be *Extended*: It remains only that we now consider in the *Last* place,

III^{dly}. What *Obligations* our *Christian Profession* has laid upon us to the discharge of this *Duty*.

Now that St. *John* tells us in the *Words* of the *Text*: It has given us an *Express Command* for it, and that as *strict* as for the *Love* of God *Himself*. So that if we cannot doubt but that we are certainly engaged in the highest manner to *Love God*, we must conclude that we are *Obliged* in a very high Degree to *Love our Neighbour also*.

But

But because this is a *Point* of very great Importance to us, and yet but too apt to be neglected by us; we will stop a little, and enquire somewhat more particularly, under how many *Engagements* we lye to the *Discharge* of it.

And *Ist*. It may be observed, That this is the *Law* of our *Natures*, as well as our *Religion*; and what our *own Reason*, no less than our *Christian Profession*, recommends to us.

For however a late *Philosopher* among us, and who would be thought to have search'd more deeply into the *Principles* of *Human Nature* than any that ever went before him, may have endeavour'd to perswade the World, That *Every Man is by Nature an Enemy* to his *Neighbour*: Yet I am sure both *Aristotle* and *Tully*, much *Wiser Men*, and no less *Curious* in their *Researches*, have given us a very *Different Account* of this *Matter*; That as all *Other Creatures by Nature Love* those of their *own Kind*, so much more should *Men* be esteem'd *Friends* to *One Another*. And a *Man* must have very much debauch'd his *own Temper*, to be able to make the least doubt of it.

Hobbs de Civ.
cap. xiii. sect. 7.

Arist. Rhet.
l. i. c. ii. &
Ethic. l. viii.
c. i.
Cic. de Fin. l. 3.
De Nat. Deor.
l. i. &c.
Andron.
Rhod. in Eth.
Arist. l. viii.
c. i.

It was for this that *God* endued us with *Reason* and *Understanding*, and gave us the *Benefit* of *Speech* to communicate our *Thoughts* to *One Another*;

Vid. Marc.
Antonin. ix.
Sect. 6.

ther ; that by the means of these we might both the better discern the *Need* we had of *One Another's Help*, and the better Keep up, a *Friendship* and *Society* with *Each Other*.

It was for this he thought fit that we should all descend from *One Common Stock* and *Original* : and be as it were the *Members* but of *One Great Family* ; that so our *Primitive Relation* of *Brethren* to *Each Other*, might yet more teach us, what our *Love* to *Each Other* ought to be.

Quintil. Declam. V.

Lactantii Epist. cap. vii.

Si enim facti

ab Uno Deo, & orti ab Uno Homine, consanguinitatis jure sociamur ; Omnem igitur Hominem Diligere debemus.

It was, in short, for this ; That *God* not only fitted us for *Society*, and endued us with a *Natural Desire* of it ; but made our *Condition* such, that we could not possibly *subsist* without it.

Lactantii Epist. cap. vii. ib.

Nam cum im-

becillior sit Hominum Natura, quam ceterarum animantium, quas Deus & instruit ad inferendam, & munit ad vim repellendam figuravit ; Affectum nobis Misericordia dedit, ut Omne Praesidium Vitae nostrae in Mutuis auxiliis poneremus.

And what must be the result of all these *Reflections* ? Certainly it can be no Other than this ; that an *Universal Love*, and *Kindness*, and *Affection* to *Each Other* is one of the most *Fundamental Laws* of our *Creation* : What a *Natural In-
stinct* teaches all *Other Creatures* ; by which the *Order* of all things subsists ; and what much more, Our *Reason* and *Inclination*, and *Condition*

Arist. Eth.

l. viii. c. 1.

Marc. Anton.

l. ix. Sect. 6.

in this World, do at once both *incline* us to, and necessarily *require* of Us.

But 2dly, If we Advance yet One Step higher, and consider our selves not barely as we are *Men*, *Partakers* of the same *Common Nature*, descended from the same *Stock*, and *Exposed* to the same *Wants*, and those no way to be supplied but by the mutual *Help* and *Charity* of One Another; But as we are *Christians* too, this will yet more Enforce this *Command* upon Us.

For to take up only St. *John's* Argument in this very Chapter: If while we were yet *Sinners*, 1 Joh. iv. 9, 10, 11. God so *Loved* us as to send his *only begotten Son* into the *World* for our *Redemption*: If the *Blessed Jesus* had so Great a *Kindness* for us, as to be content to leave the *Throne* of his *Glory*, and take Phil. II. 6, 7, 8. upon Him the form of a *Servant*, and being made in the *similitude* of a *Sinful Man*, to suffer *Death* upon the *Cross* for our *Salvation*: Then certainly we cannot but think it Our Parts to have the same *Affection* for Those for whom God Himself had so much, and *Love* Those for whom the *Holy Jesus* thought it not too much even to *die*. It is the *Apostle's* own *Inference*, *Ver. 11.* of this Chapter; *Beloved*, If God so loved us, we ought also to love One Another. See the same Argument, Ephes. V. 1, 2.

But though this therefore be a very *Affectionate*, and one would think should be a very *Convincing Way of Reasoning* too, and sufficient without any thing more to stir us up to a careful Discharge of *A Duty* so kindly recommended to us; Yet our *Saviour* has not left us, without more, and much stronger *Obligations* to it. But

3dly, Has Enforced this *Command* with all the most *Endearing Circumstances* that can I think be well imagined, to secure our *Obedience* to it.

For to consider it only in a few Particulars.

(1.) Are the *Words* of a *Dying Friend*, ever Esteemed the most precious, and the likeliest to be observed and retained by Us? This was the *Command* of the *Dying Jesus*. It was the *Subject* of his *last Discourse* which he made to his *Disciples*, as he was just going to *Offer* up Himself for Us.

See Joh. xii.
34. &c.

(2.) Do Men usually take a great Care not to be found Defective in that which is the *distinguishing Mark*, and *Characteristick* of their *Profession*? It is this very *Duty* by which we pretend, as *Christians*, to be Known from All Others: By this, says Christ, shall All Men know that ye are my *Disciples*, if ye have Love One to Another.

See this Argument managed by St. Chrys. in 1 Cor. Hom. 32. at large. Joh. xiii. 35.

(3.) Again,

(3.) Again: Should it please *God* to set some particular *Value* upon One *Duty* above All the Rest, and declare to us that He does so; nay and promise that the greatest *Blessings* in the World should certainly be the Reward of it: Should he provide by all possible Means for the Discharge of this *Duty*; and assure Us that without it He will neither forgive us our *Sins*, nor bear our *Prayers*, nor answer our *Desires*: Would not every Man that has any Pretence to *Piety*, or *Religion*; that owns a *God*, and thinks himself at All concerned to please Him, take a special Care not to be found *Wanting* in such a *Duty*?

Why all this is the very Case here. *God* has Expressed a particular *Value* for this *Duty*. He has insisted upon it more than upon any One Command besides in the Gospel. He has prefer'd it to all other Performances, even to Faith and Hope themselves: 1 Cor. xiii. 13. And declared that without it, the noblest of our Performances in any Other Parts of our Obedience, though we should work Miracles, speak with Tongues, remove Mountains, nay though we should even die for our Religion, should all avail us nothing.

See 1 Cor. xiii.
1 Joh. iii, iv,
&c.

1 Joh. II. 9,
10, 11. III.
14, 15.

1 Cor. xiii. 12,
2, 3.

He has made it the very Condition upon which to Pray for the Forgiveness of our own Offences, that we Forgive our Brother his.

Mat. vi. 12,
14, 15.

He has set it out as the *Trial* of our *Love* to *Himself*, that we should in *Obedience* to his Com-

¹ Joh. iv. 20. *mand*, *Love One Another*.

He has *instituted* the *Blessed Eucharist*, not more to keep up the *Memory* of his *Love* to us, than to

¹ Cor. X. 16, Engage us by his *Example* to *Love* our *Brethren*.
¹⁷. xi. 18, 20.

And *Lastly*, In the Great Account He has left us of the *Day* of *Judgment*, he has represented this *One Duty* as almost the *Only Thing* that shall be enquired into in Order to our *Everlasting Happiness* or *Misery*. As if *Love* were in *One Word* the *Summ* of the *Commandment*: And as St. *John* told the *Ephesians*, This *One Precept* well *observ'd*, should *suffice* for their *Salvation*.

Mat. xxv. 35,
&c.

See Rom. xiii.
8.

¹ Joh. iii. 23,
24.

But I insist too long upon these *Reflections*: And 'tis more than time to descend to a *particular Application* of them.

And that could never have been more properly made than to *such an Audience*, and upon *such an Occasion* as this.

For indeed, What is it we are now assembled for, but to *improve* our selves in the *Duty* I have hitherto been recommending to you? To *exercise* our *Charity*, and *revive* our *Love*, and raise up to Our selves a *New Opportunity* of *doing Good*, beyond what we have enjoy'd for many Years before.

This

This is certainly a very *Worthy* and *Christian* Design : An Enterprize as *pleasing* to God, as I make no doubt, through your *Wise* and *Pious* Conduct of it, it shall be *Honourable* to our County, and *Satisfactory* to all those who shall contribute either by their *Presence* or *Assistance* to it.

And sure never was there a time when we stood more in need of such *Prudent* and *truly Christian* Methods of improving our *Love* and *Affection* to One Another.

I need not tell you how *wide* our *Breaches*, how *deplorable* our *Divisions* are. And to what *Dangers* they have already *exposed* us, you very well know ; and whither they shall carry us, if not timely prevented, we have all the reason in the World to *fear*.

It was remark'd by *Josephus* as the particular *De Bell. Jud. lvi. c. 1, 4, &c.* *Insatiation* of the *Jews*, that while their *Enemies* besieged them *without*, their *Factions* and *Animosities* consumed them *within* : Insomuch that they mutually help'd to *destroy* One Another, at the very same time that the *Romans* stood ready to *devour* them all.

This was indeed a sad Case, and yet I would to God there were not somewhat too like it in our own *Circumstances*. We have a *Powerful* and *Enraged Enemy* abroad, and the *Sword* is still drawn

Isa. ix. 21.

drawn within our own Bowels : And yet as if this were not *Danger* Enough for us, we are still *Hating*, and *Undermining*, and *Quarrelling* with One Another : *Manasse* against *Ephraim*, and *Ephraim* against *Manasse*, and *Both* against *Judah* : And what shall we do in the End thereof ?

And when such are our *Divisions*, have we not all the reason in the World to *bless* God, that has now, at such a *Time* as this, put it into your Hearts, to renew again this *Solemn Engagement*, to *Love*, and *Peace*, and *Charity* with Each other ?

Oh ! may it produce all these *Blessed Effects* in our *Minds* : May it *calm* all our *Passions*, and *reconcile* all our *Differences*, if we have not already given them up as a *Preparatory* to this *Meeting* ; And instill into us a *New Spirit*, breathing forth nothing but *Love*, and *Kindness*, and *Good-will* among us !

Psalm. 122. 3.

And may our *Examples* influence All the rest of our *Country* to an *Imitation* of the like *Charity* ! That if it be the *Will of God*, we may again Enjoy the *Blessings* of *Peace*, and see our *Jerusalem* Once more *Established* as a *City* that is at *Unity* within it self.

*Now the God of Patience and Consolation, grant
you to be like-minded One towards Another,
according to Christ Jesus. That ye may with
One Mind, and One Mouth, glorifie God,
even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen, Amen.*

F I N I S.

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WHereas there is a *little Discourse* concerning the Blessed *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*; commonly sold as written by this *Author*: These are to give Notice, That there was never any Discourse of that kind written by him; and that he is wholly ignorant who the Person, meant by the *W. W.* subjoynd to the *Dedication* of it, is.